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THRESH

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The myth of a homogeneous urban landscape is currently under deconstruction. The notion of otherness as aberration is being challenged by assertions that the city, in reality, is constituted by otherness. This issue of *Thresholds* attempts to engage various discourses

surrounding this reinterpretation. Within the following articles, urban heterogeneity and its

architectural implications are explored relative to public space and gender; the struggle for equitable siting of homeless shelters; "the spaces that difference make" and a warning against the resurrection of modernist rhetoric as a means towards contemporary urban problem solving. Further, several recent student projects are included which investigate alternative occupations (both physical and programmatic) of the urban landscape.

GUARDED CONDITIONS



SEX ATTACKS / SEX ATTACKS / SEX ATTACKS / SEX ATTACKS / SEX ATTACKS / SEX ATTACKS

Lorna Simpson, *Guarded Conditions*, 1999

MEN IN SPACE

by Rosalyn Deutsche

This article is a slightly modified version of an essay that first appeared in *Artforum* (February, 1996). The issues raised here are explored further in my "Boys Town" (*Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 9, 1991).

With the publication of two new books - both by geographers - urban studies has decisively entered "the postmodern debate," determined, apparently, to win. Indeed, Edward Soja's *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* and David Harvey's *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* possess a winning combination: they bring together critical discourses about space, culture and aesthetics within the framework of a social theory that purports to explain the postmodern world. This formula has been used before, though never so thoroughly, by a disparate group of scholars who, over the last decade, have written not only about postmodern culture but about modernism as well.

For anyone in the art world eager to escape the control that traditional aesthetic categories exercise over how art is defined, such interdisciplinary approaches have a strong, even a fatal, attraction. Strong for many reasons, but especially because they permit us to view art from previously excluded perspectives within which, linked to new elements, it modifies its very identity. That shift is illuminating for what it reveals about art but also for what it suggests about knowledge: for an instant, an explanation appears to be uncertain since objects of knowledge are themselves indeterminate, lived only by discursive relationships and exclusions. Knowledge is "complete" when it conceals this process. The

interdisciplinary approach is appealing then because momentarily, it undermines the authority of all knowledge that claims to know definitively the things it studies. But interdisciplinarity holds dangers, too, because it does not automatically become anti-disciplinary. More often, disciplines unite in alliances that fortify an authoritarian epistemology - by adding to its appearance of completeness - instead of relinquishing it for a more democratic one. Is the current synthesis of urban studies, cultural theory and sociology such a defensive formation? If so, what are its casualties?

In 1985, sociologist Janet Wolff raised a similar question: Investigating the bases that had shaped her profession's definitions of both the modern urban experience and the culture of modernism, she drew a succinct conclusion: "The literature of modernity describes the experience of men."¹ Seconding Wolff's opinion and reiterating her assertion that modernity is a product of the city, Griselda Pollock later extended Wolff's thesis to evaluate another field - art history - and, in particular, T.J. Clark's "exemplary" text of social art history, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers* (1984). There, Clark compares the spatial compositions and iconography of late nineteenth-century modernist painting to modern city spaces. He describes, with sophistication, Haussmann's spatial renovation of Paris and fits his analysis into a sociological pattern popularized in Marshall Berman's influential book, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air* (1982): modernization is a process of capitalist socioeconomic restructuring, modernity, the experience produced by that process, and modernism, a cultural form developing from the historical modern experience. Adhering to

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1993

Not In My Backyard

by Nina Herzog

Over the last several years, the issue of siting controversial facilities have come to the attention of local governments and lawmakers. New Jersey, New York City, and California have each passed some sort of ordinance relative to the placement of low income housing or other such "locally-unwanted land uses" (LULUs). While government facilities have historically been deflected by wealthier white neighborhoods and imposed on poorer neighborhoods, lately the issue has entered a more political and perhaps moral arena.

In trying to address this historical inequity, some localities and states have adopted forms of "fair share" regulations or guidelines which ensure the placement of these facilities in a more equitable manner across all communities. The purpose, in NYC, for example, would be to reverse the present overabundance of LULUs in Harlem by mandating that new undesirable city projects be sited in a community which has heretofore successfully avoided such uses (for example, SoHo, the trendy artists' area south of Houston Street).

Community Board 2, Manhattan

NYC is divided into 59 community districts, each of which has a community board. These unpaid political bodies are made up of 50 residents appointed by the borough president and their local city council representative. Each year community boards are asked to submit to the city a Statement of Needs outlining the district's most pressing needs in terms of services, from parks to transportation to social services. NYC's Community Board 2 in Manhattan covers Greenwich Village and SoHo. This community board is made up predominantly of wealthy white residents, many of whom are gay or lesbian. Therefore, each year for the last several years, Community Board 2 has listed AIDS housing as one of its top priorities in its Statement of Needs. This might suggest that this community would be more anxious and willing than most to accept housing for homeless persons with AIDS. Not so.

Dinkins' Five-Year Plan

Last year Mayor Dinkins unveiled a five-year plan to address the increasing epidemic of homelessness in NYC. Upon taking office and under tremendous pressure from peers to make good on campaign promises to reverse Koch's policy of warehousing the homeless in army-style shelters, Dinkins was pressed to address what had proliferated during the Koch administration as a "quick and dirty" temporary housing solution to the growing numbers of the city's homeless.

Dinkins had offered his five-year plan as a means for ultimately closing these armories which historically have been located almost exclusively in impoverished communities. The plan proposed replacing these disease-infested tuberculosis factories with smaller transitional facilities to be scattered evenly and equitably throughout the city. One of these transitional facilities was slated for

Community Board 2, Manhattan, on what many people in the world consider the heart of the gay community, Christopher Street.

The City Proposes an AIDS Shelter in a Gay Community

The reaction of the community was not surprising. Although they wanted to help homeless people with AIDS, Christopher Street was inappropriate, they claimed, because it already was overburdened with facilities for people with AIDS, three of which were within several blocks of the proposed site. The detractors of this shelter also cited the fact that the City had not contacted the community or sought its input into the siting process. If they had, the community claimed, insiders could have warned the City that Christopher Street was already "over impacted" by these facilities. Community members, including most heatedly, members of the community board, insisted that siting of such services could not be achieved without the input and consideration of local community leaders.

What emerged was an unusual partnership between the City and the community board, aimed at reinventing the siting and programmatic design processes for the proposed facility in Community Board 2. A group of community leaders began to meet with City officials regularly in an effort to realize a design that suited the City's needs in providing housing for the homeless, and also allayed neighbor's fears by letting them in on the main aspects of the design process, from security to eligibility criteria. Much progress had been made and many issues resolved when the community unexpectedly learned that the City had decided to consolidate four emergency assistance units - where families go when they become homeless overnight - into one and locate it in Community Board 2. This brought an abrupt end to trust and dialogue.

Support (or Lack Thereof) for the Mayor's Plan

Meanwhile, reaction to the mayor's plan by other city officials was overwhelmingly negative. Each politician found flaw with the plan and used his/her power to try to defeat it. Particularly outraged were the representatives from upper middle or middle class white areas that had successfully resisted such uses in the past.

Since the mayor's plan called for more equitable distribution of smaller shelters, he had no choice but to take on a powerful group of opponents, with more money and better political connections.

Only two community boards, including Community Board 2, voted to support the mayor's plan, thereby making a commitment to work with the City to accept a plan for a shelter. But when Community Board 2's committee dissolved, it seemed the plan was done for. About a year later, a local non-profit housing organization responded to a Request for Proposals (RFP) put out by the City in which they resurrected a plan to establish small transitional shelters throughout the City.

Challenging the Community's Claims on Siting

Housing Works, Inc., the said non-profit organization,

(continued on p.5)



Brown Street, SoHo

WHY DOES SOHO COMMUNITY COALITION HATE PEOPLE WITH AIDS?

They don't. Provided that they are white, gay men. Therefore, their opposition to Housing Works' planned Day Treatment Center at the corner of Green and Grand, can be explained quite simply.

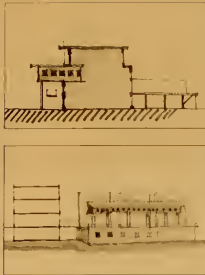
Housing Works provides housing and services to homeless people with AIDS, the majority of whom are poor, black and latino/a. The members of the Coalition are white, middle class and professional. Racism and bigotry are the reason for their fight. The old "NIMBY" mentality has been cleverly reworked to fit a new "cause."

Housing Works' clients are no different than their SoHo neighbors. They are men, women and children, both gay and straight, single and with families. All working together to embrace the future as healthy, self-sufficient individuals.

It is telling that a coalition must define itself as a "community," through the shared perception of an external "enemy."

Aaron Kupper, NYC AIDS activist.

* A coalition based in the SoHo Greenwich Village CB2 district



Berlin Immigration Center

Susanne May Spring 1993
critic Fernando Doneyko

The design problem is the definition and conceptualization of a center for immigration in the City of Berlin. This facility for reintegration and retraining of technicians and craftsmen from various cultural backgrounds is an example of the potential for the resolution of conflict between individuals and culture in the context of the actual world-wide immigration phenomenon. It will provide help not only for survival, but for survival with dignity by adapting skills from one background to another, as well as by counseling the immigrants relative to the cultural and administrative implications of working and living in a new environment. A residential facility will facilitate the formation of small learning teams, while the school itself will be a cluster of classrooms and workshops for hands-on learning. The heterogeneity of the community demands a sensitive understanding of the making of phenomenological and experiential architectural facts through form and material that may be universally accessible.

STUDIO WORK

PAGE THREE

Mapping the St. Patrick's Day Parade by Ernest Pascucci

In Elizabeth Grosz's recent essay "Bodies Cities" she refuses to accept identity as distinct and total, but rather views it as radically site- and situation-specific. Such a model indicates the complexities involved when identity politics are played out in space, as is the case with the recent controversies over the presence of Irish lesbians and gays in the St. Patrick's Day Parades in New York and Boston.

On March 14, 1991, two days before the 230th annual St. Patrick's Day Parade was to take place in New York City, the mayor's office negotiated a compromise between the Irish Lesbian and Gay Organization (ILGO), the group whose petition to march for the first time under their own banner in the parade was refused, and the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the parade's sponsor, who did the refusing. ILGO accepted the standing order of Division 7, a progressive chapter of the Hibernians, to march under their banner. The group also agreed to abide by the parade rules prohibiting "marches" from wearing T-shirts or anything else that would set them apart. In exchange, Mayor David Dinkins would forfeit his traditional place at the head of the parade and would instead march with the gay group. Though ILGO sacrificed its own visibility as an organization for people who are both Irish and gay, its members felt that the mayor's presence would make up for this, both in symbolism and in media exposure.

The following day when news of the compromise hit the press, the New York Times praised the mayor's "saintly St. Patrick's solution" in an editorial. Then, in a news article, the Times speculated on the possibility of the mayor marching twice, first at the head of the parade and then with ILGO and Division 7, and even went so far as to detail how his feat of being in two places at once might be accomplished. Despite all the Times' theorizing of Dinkins as a split political subject, the mayor chose to march only once, with Division 7 and the Irish gays. NYC's first black mayor thus became the first to decline to lead a St. Patrick's Day Parade—to which the mayor responded, "It's not my parade." The parade itself, which for years has been troubled by drug drunkenness and disorderly conduct, generated, was "more raucous than usual," as the Times duly noted, because this year it was the stage for a debate over sexual politics. Dinkins and ILGO were met with a variety of responses, ranging from occasional cheers of support, to turned backs in expression of silent disapproval, to boos, catcalls, and beer bottles thrown in expression of violent disapproval.

The event as a whole was subject to a wide range of interpretations. Many spectators felt it had become "too political," finding the presence of the gay marchers divisive and disruptive to the spirit of the parade. Dinkins, meanwhile, compared his experience of marching with ILGO to marching in Birmingham during the civil rights movement. Members of the press perceived the mayor's symbolic gesture as a sign of newfound integrity, a willingness on the part of the mayor to take a stand regardless of political fallout. Others saw it as a shrewd political move. While most Irish-Americans have migrated to the suburbs, the gay population remains a sizable voting block within Dinkins's constituency.

However, the parade also revealed a gay community divided on many issues. Members of ILGO, seeking peaceful inclusion in the Hibernians' parade, chose to make their political identity visible but, for strategic purposes, not to appear all that visibly different from other paraders. Other queer activists, including the Irish Queers, a group formed in response to the Hibernians' intransigence, had plans to hold a separate action along the parade route rather than march under Division 7's banner, but were persuaded by ILGO to join Division 7 and wear its marks. Among the sea of politicians, reporters, and queer activists' fatigue, it was hard to spot the actual Irish, commented Richard Goldstein in the Village Voice. "There were only eight or nine of them, in cloth coats and mottled hair. How could they stand out against the young black queer in the proboscis Mohawk and fringed leather jacket, with a huge pink triangle printed in his back?" The ethnic solidarity expressed by

the Irish gays and lesbians was clearly not shared by all of their queer brothers and sisters. "I'm not even in my body today," commented Bill Dobbs, a member of Queer Nation who marched in the service of a cause that was not his own. In acknowledgment of the specifics of ILGO's cause, Paul O'Dwyer stated, "We do have a different agenda. We're bound together by being Irish, being immigrants, and being gay."

In the two years following this initial controversy, the St. Patrick's Day Parade has become the site of an annual debate played out on the streets of Manhattan and South Boston. In NYC, ILGO has been banned from marching for the past two years. The Hibernians claim that there is a religious parade, and that homosexuality is antithetical to the beliefs of the Catholic Church. Although excluding a group on the basis of sexual orientation violates the city's civil rights laws, the Hibernians have kept ILGO out by financially privatizing the event. Their cause has been held up in state courts by the first amendment right to assembly. In Boston, however, the Irish Lesbians and Gays of Boston (ILGB), have been permitted by court order to march for the past two years. Despite the Allied War Veterans' Council privatization of the parade in 1993, because the Boston parade coincides with another holiday, Evacuation Day (in celebration of a Revolutionary War battle), a Massachusetts superior judicial court ruled that the parade is a secular event and thereby granted ILGB the right to march. The Allied War Veterans' Council has been hard pressed to prove that the tanks that roll down the streets of Southie during the parade are part of a religious procession.

The efforts of ILGO, GLIB and their supporters have, in the words of O'Dwyer, placed "the discourse of lesbian and gay rights firmly within the discourse of St. Patrick's Day." In NYC's 1993 parade, peaceful protests and civil disobedience along the parade route resulted in the arrest of 228 activists. The threat that queer visibility poses to the Hibernians' conception of Irish identity is reflected in the lengths to which they will go to maintain their vision, including the cordoning off of two blocks surrounding St. Patrick's Cathedral for Cardinal John O'Connor and invited guests. In Dublin, where a lesbian/gay contingent has marched without problems for the past few years, the group carried a banner this year that read "HELLO NEW YORK." More recently, in Boston, the procession of 25 GLIB members, surrounded by twice the usual police force, has become the focus of the parade. The responses elicited from the predominantly Irish community of South Boston, ranging from verbal and violent antagonism to open support, the latter of which has grown substantially from 1992 to 1993, reveal a community divided over the issue of lesbian and gay civil rights.

Relevant to the struggle for queer visibility within a numerous constituencies represented here is Edward Soja's call for "spatial histories." The overlaps of sexual, ethnic, and religious identities and the various subject positions in these St. Patrick's Day Parade struggles constitute, as the title of Soja's forthcoming book implies, "the spaces that difference makes." However, to adequately address the particularities of the various subject positions in space requires a more complicated model than Soja offers when he defers to Fredric Jameson's prescription for "cognitive mapping." As Rosalyn Deutsche has pointed out, there is no one map that can relate the experience of the postmodern subject to a larger totality precisely because the postmodern subject is not one, but many, and the intricacies of subjective experience ultimately yield to radically different maps. Consider, in this light, Dinkins's experience of the 1991 parade as a reenactment of the civil rights movement versus the disembodied experience of Bill Dobbs, who chose to forfeit his own agenda in defiance, for a few hours, along the parade route, to the agenda of the Irish lesbians and gays. The spaces that difference makes are marked by the relational divergences among the various subjects operating within political spaces that parade their politics in the streets.

(MINOR) Urban Intervention

Thesis: Neil Harrigan
Advisor: Jan Wampler
Spring 1993

The relationship between design and the idea of a framework is essentially an attitude about ordering. A framework is an intellectual proposition which can support a variety of ideas, and in doing so, provide a resolution to the intersection of these ideas. The framework may be thought of as a mechanism for bringing things together: a joint that enables simultaneous levels of intervention to occur.

This intervention in the underutilized Boston & Maine Railroad right of way which runs through Cambridgeport from Mass. Ave. to the Charles River is intended to provide a framework for a more urban occupation of the site. By introducing physical elements which constitute various densities of urban fabric, a variety of unspecified interpretations or programmatic occupations are invited.



Residual Modernism?

by Juli Carson and C. Lindive Emoungu



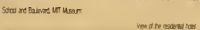
Harlem 1911



Exiting via corridor



Parkside School, Penton & MIT 1949-50



School and Boulevard, MIT Museum

View of the residential hotel



Thresholds #6, an issue concerned with contemporary reconsiderations of housing and its various applications, featured the Frederick Douglass Boulevard Project: a housing development proposed for the southwest quarter of Harlem designed by Roy Stockland along with Carolyn Carson, Linda Gatter and August Schaefer. This project and its companion, the Clinton School, a K-12 facility for the South Bronx by the same design team, composed an exhibit titled *School and Boulevard* which was on view at MIT's Compton Gallery this Spring. Concerned in Stockland and Gatter's Hudson Studio, an architecture and planning firm in New York City, the FDB project is an ambitious effort to develop progressive residential units "motivated by social and civic responsibilities."¹ However, because FDB is proposed for the highly disputed region between 118th and 124th streets east of Amsterdam Avenue—a "zone" in which the gentrified (displaced indigenous communities) and gentrifier (Columbia residents and New York liberals) live in close proximity, the project comes to realization within an environment ripe for controversy and criticism. In responding to *Thresholds'* feature on FDB, it is therefore not our intention to critique the project's design, nor to anticipate the efficacy of the residential schema. Rather, we wish to address the textual/rhetorical polemics of FDB's representation as realized in the project's two accompanying catalogues, which exacerbate pre-existing cultural interests (both architectural and habitation) present in the proposed site's neighborhood(s).

In the post-Pruitt-Igo era, a time in which notions of ownership, squatting, and homesteading are radically reconfiguring housing, it is troublesome to encounter the uncritical framing of FDB in modernist terms. High modernist references, including Frank Lloyd Wright's 1894 Lexington Apartments and Louis Kahn's 1948 Philadelphia Triangle Area Redevelopment, are posited in the project's catalogues as the groundwork upon which a (post)modernist strategy of urban integration is said to operate. However, this (post)modern strategy, in Stockland's catalogues, seems less a tool for the departure from, or critique of, modernist housing legacies, but rather exists problematically as the means by which modernist paradigms can be imposed upon what remains, in the rhetoric of his text, a slum community.

This is not to say that the comprehensive rejuvenation/revitalization of Harlem isn't ideologically differentiated by Stockland from canonical modernist paradigms. Instead, his (post)modern strategies/inductions serve to retro-fit the referenced modernist models into the urban landscape of Harlem. Within the rhetoric of the catalogues, which reflects Stockland's overall modernist framework, these (post)modernist strategies are thus coopted as supports for problematic modernist epistemologies. These coopted strategies include: the integration of proposed apartments blocks and a residential hotel into a maintained indigenous urban landscape, the consideration of "alternative domestic relationships" in the planning of individual housing units (though these "alternative" people are not pictured, who or what is he speaking about or generalizing?), and the redesignation of late 20th century "slums" as "marginalized" communities (although the word "slum" is still invoked by the phraseology "residual neighborhood").

As laid out in the catalogues, however, FDB refuses to signify the elements of difference to which it claims to be directed, due to the text/image's explicitly modernist tone. Accordingly, the invocation of what can be seen as the default problem (i.e., urban blight) is situated along side the architectural solution. The paradigmatic notion of urban blight (with its "residual" residents walking along the streets which Elvington, Malcolm, and Baldwin no longer do) emerges from and further reinforces some problematic preconceptions. Most notable among these are two primary beliefs: first, that an underprivileged yet unified community in desperate need of repair might be swiftly delivered from its plight by an architecturally modernist housing model (appropriate in the catalogue's rhetoric

which pictorially offers modernist Harlem, circa 1917, as the past to be recaptured), and second, the *revitalization of a lost "civic" community*, with its essentialist paradigm of public/private which historically has served to create fusions of homogenized societal unity that depend on the production of otherness and exclusion (what, or better yet, which community, which public is being served or represented?).² Where in Stockland's catalogues are the people described as the "community," the "alternative families" or the "homeworker?" Who is pictured? Spit-shinned toddlers from 1950s (?) suburbia. The presence of well-to-do toddlers in Stockland's *School and Boulevard* catalogue is a curious inclusion since well-socialized children in the past have been used as a litmus test for the success of modernist housing/schooling projects. What about children from the "residual" neighborhood? Why are they not pictured?

Who and what is pictured from contemporary Harlem, which is then juxtaposed with imagery of a Harlem lost, are impromptu outdoor soup kitchens, graffiti inscribed streets, and abandoned lots littered with junked cars. This is not to say that Stockland et al. are unaware of the diverse communities which their project serves, or that the Harlem Renaissance should not be a source of cultural/comunal pride, but rather that the modernist notion of community, in which contemporary dynamics of social/cultural difference is not allowed to be played out, is firmly planted as the foundation upon which Stockland seems to be saying we can advance social change. In fact, it could be argued that the very notion of the modernist community, with its reformist architectural housing projects, is, in itself, one of the contributing factors that aided in the creation of what today Stockland describes as the neglected and impoverished "residual" neighborhood of Harlem.

Looking at nothing other than the catalogues, the notion of there being one problem is thus the *leit motif* of Stockland's project: urban blight caused by greed and divestment in particular models of housing which then results in a neglected "residual" community. Accordingly, there is one solution: the "challenge" that demands "comprehensive planning." In these terms, the "revitalization" of historical Harlem invokes the reformist planning narrative of cleaning up the city in order to restore Harlem to what was lost. What is lost by whom or cleaned up for whom is not directly addressed but is only implied. Therefore, what one would hope were exhausted stereotypes of inner city complacency with, and complicity in, poverty are thus allowed to flourish. Ironically, Stockland et al.'s project presumably was conceived to prevent the gentrification which facilitates what is problematically termed by many as "urban blight." However, not only do the catalogues avoid rigorously addressing the site's ongoing gentrification, but modernist models (of architecture as sanitation), which go hand in hand with gentrification, are the backdrop for a comprehensive solution for housing in Harlem. In this light, the intentions of the design team, as represented by the catalogues' text and imagery, are difficult to place. ●

¹ BOULEVARD MANHATTAN, Roy Stockland, Linda Gatter, Minnsen 6, (Columbia University, 1991) p. 1.

² See Iris Marion Young's "The Idea of Impartiality and the Civic Public," in *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, Princeton University Press, 1990 and Bruce Robbins, "Introduction: The Public as Phantom," in Robbins, ed. *The Public as Phantom*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, forthcoming, 1993.

4

Urban Still Life East Cambridge, Massachusetts

Thesis: Guy Willey
Advisor: Prof. William Porter
Fall 1992

The design task is the re-invention of abandoned nineteenth-century buildings in a factory complex. Treated as found objects, the existing buildings are studied as an entirety and as an ensemble of different parts. Using these building remainders, new programmatic pieces (theater, retail, office, and food gallery) are inserted into the composition to stimulate the whole.

A new order of vehicular circulation is imposed on the ground level for access and service. A new pedestrian mezzanine level stretches through all the buildings, joining opposite ends of the site. Pedestrian bridges connect a proposed public transportation stop to new public corridors within an existing brick shell.

Properties of screen, frame and passage create a variety of unique conditions unfolding into the site marking an up-dated reading and a conscious passing through the site.

Backyard (continued from p.2)

wrote to the community board stating its interest in a former City-run library for the blind as a potential transitional shelter site. Housing Works proposed that if the community involved found this site inappropriate, they would cooperate to find an acceptable one. The letter also reminded the Community Board that, according to its own Statement of Needs, housing for persons with AIDS was of the highest priority. It was further stressed that Housing Works would include the community in early planning decisions.

Ironically, the community board's unofficial response was that it was not in the position to make determinations on using. Although the community board blamed the demise of Drinkins' five-year plan on its failure to seek the counsel of local leaders regarding siting, when presented with the opportunity to site and design an appropriate shelter, the Community Board shrank away from the task. The Community Board realized that any "residential" place conducive to settling homeless people is inevitably in someone's backyard. Most importantly, if involved in siting, as it had demanded to be for years, the Community Board would be subject to the inevitable intense political heat associated with approving, or even suggesting, a site.

Conclusion - Is There Any Hope?

Recently there has been much talk regarding the need for more equitable, less racist, and less economically segregated siting, but there has been little discussion of how this process should be refined. Effective siting cannot be achieved without the involvement of the communities. Yet if a hostile community is well-off, it has the resources to use early notification to gain more time to organize against a project or to seek legal redress.

"Fair share" regulations are intended to accommodate community input by means of early notification of pending projects. The hope is that through community involvement and watchdog organizations, the programs will be enhanced. Unfortunately, my experience, as someone who sits on both sides of the fence, has shown that communities simply want the power to say no. We are years away, in terms of education and social reform, from the effective use of "fair share" principles to ensure well-run, successful, programs for the homeless which could be viewed as an asset - not a liability - to the community. ●

Nina Herzog, M.U.P. is former chair and currently vice-chair of Community Board 2, Manhattan. Social Services Committee. She is also supportive services program director at Housing Works, Inc.



Barbara Kruger, Untitled 1981

Men (continued from p.1)

this model of society in which so-called levels - sets of relations and political practices - are, in the end, hierarchically compartmentalized. Clark explains that, for him, economic life is not a given reality but like the cultural realm, consists of representations. He neglects, nonetheless, to consider the political meaning produced by his own representation of society, one which, in fact, he does not really examine as a representation at all. Instead, he feels free to "insist," unproblematically, "on the determinate weight in society of those arrangements we call economic" and to state that the "class of an individual" is the determinate fact of social life. Consequently, Clark interprets nineteenth century modernist painting as an artistic response to the experience produced by Hausmann's spatial reorganization of Paris which was determined, in turn, by the restructuring of capitalism during the Second Empire. Modernism "failed," in Clark's view, because it did not map the class divisions of modern Paris but only obscured them by recreating in painting what Hausmann produced in the actual built environment - a mythologization of the city as "spectacle."

Not surprisingly, this account produces, as Pollock notes, "peculiar closures on the issue of sexuality." However, Clark's descriptions of cities and paintings do not entirely discount women's "experience" or even the topic of gender relations. What his book dismisses is feminism as a requisite, rather than expendable, mode of social analysis. This repression is necessitated less by Clark's interest in class than by his image of the social as an a priori totality in which a single set of social relations are privileged as determinate - the foundation of social totality.

Feminism, of course, challenged this kind of totalizing depiction long ago. It has also contributed indispensably to aesthetics precisely in Clark's principle area of concern - the visual image. Clark's book addresses both the city as an image and images of the city. For years, feminist theorists have differentiated vision - pleasure in looking - from the notion of seeing as a process of perceiving the real world. The image and the act of looking are understood to be relations highly mediated by fantasies that structure and are structured by sexual difference. Visual space, in the first instance, a set of social relations, can never be innocent or assumed to reflect, either directly or through contrived mediations, "real" social relations that reside elsewhere - in Clark's account, in the economic relations producing the built environment. When, in fact, that environment, created in part by capitalism, becomes an image - becomes what Raymond Lestruc calls "the locus of a certain 'investment' by the eye" - its meaning is no longer reducible to nor fixed by the economic circumstances of its production. At this point, feminist theories of visual space intersect with and complicate the political economy of urban space which does not inherently exclude feminism. That relation of exclusion takes place in an epistemological field where grandiose claims are made on theoretical space where only one theory is allowed to explain social relations of subordination. Relating difference in social theory, the literature about modernity issuing from a synthesis of urban and cultural disciplines has, in this manner, constructed a coherent field by eliminating feminist criticism.

Will the same be true for urban postmodernity? This question has hovered at the margins of cultural discourse since 1984 when Fredric Jameson, drawing eclectically from spatial and aesthetic discourses, published his famous article, "Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism." There, Jameson negatively assessed postmodernism as a cultural "pathology," a symptom produced by postmodern fragmentations - of space, society, the body, the subject - caused in his view, solely by the economic and spatial restructuring that constitute capitalism's third stage. The proper activity for radical artists, he prescribed, is an "aesthetic of cognitive mapping" - the production of spatial imagery by means of which inhabitants of "hyperspace" might overcome fragmentation, recover the ability to perceive the underlying totality and, concomitantly, find their place in the world. Jameson contends that he is suggesting how radical forces engage in political battles

over representation. Yet his proposal for analyzing space as a visual image, begs, just as Clark's does, all political questions raised by feminist critiques of representation - most notably, the issue of postmodernity. A commanding position on the battleground of representation - one that denies the partial and fragmented conditions of vision by claiming to "perceive" a total truth - is an illusory place whose construction, motivated by wishes, entails hallucinations and hysterical blindness. It is a position in a relationship of knowledge that also produces total - unfragmented - subjects. This realization cannot be wished away by stating, as Jameson has, that his concepts are, of course, representations, the specific forms of representations matter since they are always acts of differentiation. If representations are relationships, rather than embodiments of essential meanings, then the high ground of total knowledge, the external place, can only be gained by a particular encounter with difference - the relegation of other subjectivities to positions of invisibility or, what amounts to the same thing, inclusion through subordination.

Jameson's image of society and his desire for accurate maps illustrate the mechanism. Fragmentation, in his account, is only a pathology and the ability to find "our" place has been destroyed by late capitalism alone. Because he disavows the importance and complexity of other social relations, Jameson confuses capitalism's fragmentations with the "fragmentations" caused by challenges - from feminists, gays, lesbians, postcolonials, antiracists - to the types of discursive power Jameson himself exercises: universalizing foundationalist thought, essentialist discourses, constructions of unitary subjectivity. Such challenges expose Jameson's fragmented unity and complete subject as fictions from the start and he responds by silencing them. Accordingly, he has recently expressed any doubts about the nature of what he calls "cognitive mapping" by revealing that what he actually means by this procedure for uncovering total reality is "class consciousness," thereby definitively wiping feminism off the map of radical social theory. How does it resurface? As just another force fragmenting our ability to apprehend the "real" unified political field.

The Jameson School of Interdisciplinarity has yet to receive sustained attention from art critics. Its relation to feminism is placed on the agenda again by Harvey's and Soja's books about postmodernism. Leading figures in Marxist geography, the authors of these texts have each contributed invaluable analyses of the social production of space as the very condition of capitalist restructuring. They have turned to cultural theory in response to several provocations: arguments taking place within their own fields, the divergence of "postmodern" politics from traditional Marxism, and, perhaps, sociology's inability to address the built environment as a signifying practice. The seriousness of Harvey's and Soja's desire to embrace the cultural field is compromised, however, by their bibliographies of postmodernism which are very exclusive, virtually restricted to texts by white, western males and, of those, none that deal with feminism and postmodernism.

To note these similarities is not to equate the two books. Indeed, Soja is uncomfortable with Harvey's rigid economic formulas for explaining the production of space and, to define space as social from the beginning, he advances, first, a concept he calls the "socio-spatial dialectic" and then, a "spatialized ontology." He says he is willing to disintegrate boundaries between disciplines and, at the same time, to avoid reducing their specificity, but his readings of "postmodern landscapes" actually leave the cultural and economic realms curiously unmodified by their encounter, the "essential" identity of each remain intact. Further, by organizing the city into a landscape brought into existence by an outside viewer and by refusing to consider the politics of such a spatialization as an obdetracting representation, Soja clings

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tenaciously to a belief in the total vantage point, despite, as Liz Bondi writes, the interest he expresses in postmodern decentering.⁷

Harvey sets out even more resolutely on the path followed by Clark and Jameson, defending political economy against postmodern "fragmentation." With him, Jameson is no longer alone in the strength of the negative evaluation he brings to postmodernity for Harvey, too, endows postmodernism with a monolithic and threatening identity, it mirrors fragmented, dislocated, compressed and abstracted experiences of space and time, experiences wrought by post-Fordist capitalism's regime of flexible accumulation - the condition of postmodernity. The concern for difference and specificity expressed in some strands of postmodern thought - their rejection of universalisms - complies with the concealment of capitalism's global penetration which Harvey equates with social reality. So does the interest of artists in what Harvey terms "image creation." Attention to images, he believes, represents a turn away from the "real" social, because it fetishistically rejects "essential" social meanings; it doesn't provide us with Jamesonian "mental maps" to match "current realities" or a "trajectory out of the condition of postmodernity."⁸

Here, Harvey is seriously confused. It is certainly true that contemporary art has explored the image. But critical practices have done so neither to assert the status of the image as a container of universal, aesthetic meanings nor to celebrate the dominant images that circulate in our society. Rather, they have investigated images as part of a realm of representation where meanings and subjects are socially and hierarchically produced as, among other things, gendered. To the extent that this is its goal, postmodernism's concentration on images is emphatically not a turn away from, but rather toward, the social. If, that is, relations of gender and sexuality count as more than epiphenomena of society. But Harvey, ignorant of contemporary materialist discourses about images and blind to the fact that some of the art he criticizes contests the fetishistic representation of women, argues - in the name of antifetishism - for transparent images that reveal "essential" meanings. This is truly fetishistic - conception in which representations are produced by subjects who, free of desire, discover, rather than project, meaning corresponds to Harvey's own image of society: a metatheory that purports to perceive the absolute foundation governing social coherence. Postmodernism interferes with that depiction. "Postmodernism," he complains, "takes matters too far." It takes them beyond the point where any coherent politics are left. Postmodernism has us, denying that kind of meta-theory which can grasp the political-economic processes.⁹

Everyone knows by now that postmodernism means different things to different people. Distaste for the "complication" is no excuse for reducing, as Harvey does, all critiques of totalization to an undifferentiated mass or for ignoring, in the process, the persistence of feminism within postmodern culture. Given that presence, what can it possibly mean to characterize postmodernity, negatively, as fragmented? Such assertions veer dangerously close to right wing leters that feminists disrupt "our" heritage.

It would be a shame if urban studies intervened in cultural theory only to reinstate such ideas. Non-subordinated feminisms would, then, only be equated with political escapism and feminist contributions to analyses of the visual environment rejected as evasions of urban reality. If, unresponsive to the sexual politics of representation addressed in contemporary art, urban discourse continues to construct space as a feminized object surveyed by mastering subjects and if such spatializations go unexamined as a mode of analysis, the discipline will reproduce oppressive forms of knowledge. Driven by the desire to preserve the authority of the social sciences, urban studies will approach new cultural ideas only to expunge them as a threat.

Artists do not need more directives for the "cognitive mapping" of global space or exhortations to take the position of the totality. Postmodernists who problematize the image - artists like Cindy Sherman, Barbara Kruger, Sina Kribowski, Mary Kelly, Connie Hatch - reject such vanguard roles. They have been saying

for years that, thanks to the recognition that representations are produced by subjected not universal subjects - the world is not so easily mapped anymore. They don't seek to conquer this complexity but to multiply the fragmentations, mapping the configurations of fantasy that produce coherent images, including coherent images of politics. Geographers will have to consider that space.

¹ Janet Wolff, "The Invisible Flaneuse: Women and the Literature of Modernity," *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol. 2, no. 3, 1985, p. 37.

² T.J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1983, pp. 6-7.

³ Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art*, London and New York, Routledge, 1988, p. 53.

⁴ Raymond Ledrut, *Les images de la ville*, Paris, Anthropos, 1973, p. 21. Translated in Goldshteyn and Lagopoulos, eds., *The City and the Sign: An Introduction to Urban Semiotics*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1986, p. 223.

⁵ Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," *New Left Review*, 164, July-August 1984, p. 63.

⁶ Jameson, "Marxism and Postmodernism," *New Left Review*, 176, July-August 1984, p. 44.

⁷ Liz Bondi, "On Gender Tourism in the Space Age: A Feminist Response to Postmodern Geographies," paper presented at Association of American Geographers Conference, Toronto, 1990.

⁸ David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*, Oxford and Cambridge, Mass., 1989, pp. 116-117.

NOTES:

- The Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals has long been available through librarian-assisted online searches. Now, the libraries have purchased unlimited access to this index in a user-friendly format called Citadel. This file contains citations for articles from an extensive list of architecture and planning journals from 1977 to the present. To access this file you must have an Athena account or other access to the Internet. You are welcome to ask librarians at Rotch Library's Reference Desk for assistance in trying out this file. Printed guides are also available at Rotch.

- Thresholds is looking for a new MArch co-editor. Anyone interested in subverting this Visual and Verbal Forum should contact Juli Carson through the Department of Architecture.



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